

ADDRESS

AT DEDICATION OF MONUMENT

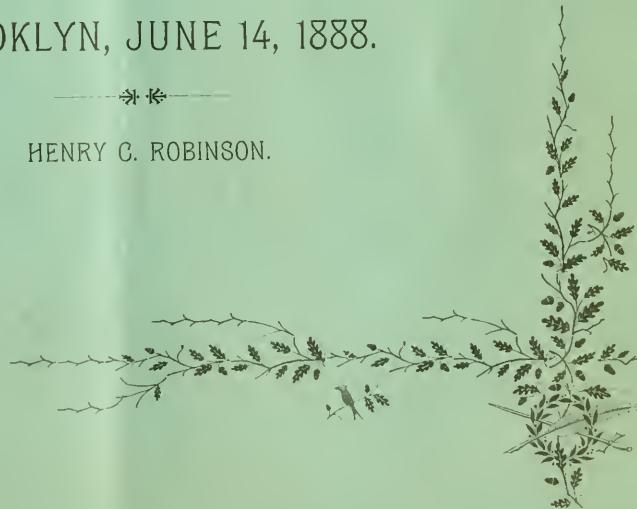


To

GEN. ISRAEL PUTNAM.

BROOKLYN, JUNE 14, 1888.

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HENRY C. ROBINSON.



ADDRESS
OF
HENRY C. ROBINSON,
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AT THE
DEDICATION,
BY THE
STATE OF CONNECTICUT,
OF
GEN. PUTNAM'S STATUE,
AT

Brooklyn, June 14, 1888.

HARTFORD, CONN.:
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Ninety-eight years ago the wasted form of an old soldier, scarred by tomahawk and bullet, was laid to rest in yonder graveyard. The sacred acres were filled with mourners. He was consigned to sleep in the echoes of artillery and of musketry, and under the glories of the flag, the fibres of whose folds his own brave hands had so conspicuously helped to weave. His epitaph was written by the foremost scholar of our State. The fret of time, the frost of winter, and the selfish hand of the relic-hunter wasted the stone slab on which it was written. And here, above a handful of ashes, all that remains of that stalwart frame, which, in life, was the inspiration of Colonists, the hate of Frenchmen, the fear of Englishmen, and the awe of Indians, to-day, late, but not too late, a grateful State has built a seemly and enduring pedestal, has placed upon it his war-horse, and called again to his saddle, with his bronzed features saluting the morning, the Connecticut hero of the revolution.

Blessed is a state which has a history. Its present is the natural evolution of its past. Out of struggles it has grown; from storms and sunlight of other years it has made strength. Its greatness of other centuries is its renewed and transfigured greatness of to-day, its traditions are its inspirations, its buried heroes are its living prophets. It is the blessedness of continued personality, the manliness of the mature man; its brain has developed with its muscles, its heart with its bones. Reverence and pride for the past, the kindling warmth of tender associations, and the hallowed flames of love are its attributes. The

scholar reads about it, the poet sings of it, the philosopher studies it. The banks of its streams are sacred for the foot-prints upon them; its mountains are dear for the brave steps that climbed them; its groves are instinct with the meditations of its patriot fathers; its churches pure with the purity of its saints; its graveyards are peopled with the presences of its ancestry. Thermopylæ was a perpetual legacy to the sons of Sparta, the atmosphere of the Academy was an everlasting inheritance to the men of Athens. The children of Israel sing the songs of Miriam and David, study the philosophy of Moses, and Ezra, and Hillel, fight over the battles of Saul and the Macca-bees, and rightly say, they are all ours. The wars are over, the wisdom is written, the lyrics are sung, the laws are written on papyrus, are cut in stone, are printed on paper, but the lesson in them all is as fresh as a bubbling spring. We stand almost aghast before the grandeur of a new state, as Dakota, but we find no leaves of history to turn over and study and ponder. But when we examine the record of the last two and a half centuries of human progress, the filial love of the people of Connecticut finds a catalogue of statesmen, and warriors, and orators, and philanthropists, a story of patriotism, and self-government, and education, and discipline, and virtue, and piety, better than all the traditions, gathered from three thousand years, which haunt the waters of the Ganges, or are assembled on the banks of the Nile. And the result of those early frictions and fights with rough nature and rougher man are written in the culture, and courage, and refinement, and sentiment of our

little Commonwealth of to-day. There was choice seed dropped in the scant soil of the wilderness by the pilgrims and by the colonial rebels, but lo, the wilderness has become a garden and blossoms like the rose.

A nation's character may be read in its heroes. It has been often said that no nation is better than its gods. Nor can it be unlike its demi-gods. Tell us what were the shrines in the Pantheon and whose ashes lie in Westminster Abbey, and we can more than guess what was Rome and what is England. And if the gates of the abbeys have opened chiefly at the bidding of kings, the people have found the graves of their heroes in the churchyard, have followed their ashes to the rivers where spite and malice flung them, have chanted their stories in song and set up their memorials in marble and bronze. If men of blood and ambition are the ideals of a nation, we find a nation of warriors; if patriots are the heroes, be they on the battle-field or in the council chamber, we find a nation proud of its nationality. Nor are our heroes only the leaders. A personal friend of Mr. Lincoln tells how he rode with him in a carriage through the city of Washington when its squares were dotted with camps, and its streets were full of boys in blue. When generals and field-officers saluted him, he returned the compliment by the customary and formal wave of the hand, but when a private soldier presented arms, he rose in his carriage and took off his hat. He did not undervalue leadership, but he appreciated that patriotic, unheralded support of the flag which was found in the lines. And so our people, in memorializing the

critical struggle at Antietam, chose for a symbol, not a portrait of one of the many general officers who made great names on that historic ground, but the figure of an American soldier, with no state or regimental distinction, only a type of the hundreds of thousands who fought and fell, and whose names do not appear in the histories, but whose blood won the victory.

If it is true that the admiration of a community is significant of its character, it is equally true of its contempt. It is not military greatness that we honor to-day, it is loyalty to manhood and to truth and to country. When the aggressions of the mother country became insufferable, and the cry was "to arms," there were two men upon the soil of our little Connecticut, who were especially conspicuous for their military accomplishments. Both incarnated personal bravery; neither had learned an alphabet out of which the word "fear" could be made; both were leaders. One gathered the sons of New Haven upon the Green and drilled them for war,—the other left his oxen in the field and rode to Boston. Both had achieved success and glory in the earlier wars. The eyes not only of Connecticut and New England, but of Virginia and the Carolinas turned to both of them. Both were offered high places by the enemy. One went through the struggle with an unclouded story, and to-day his name, the name of Putnam, is written upon nine counties in nine states, and we are bending in reverence before his statue. The other fled his country, died in ignominy, and an American community would as soon adopt the name of Judas as the name of Arnold.

Nations are not created by acts of parliament, nor by acts of congress, nor are they made by treaties. Statutes and treaties imply states behind them. Nations grow—grow from the people. The United States are the result of no sovereignty but the sovereignty of this great people—a people made and being made of the manifold strength of the older folk. Time has winnowed away the chaff and sifted out the grain from many peoples, and many races, and has brought many good “remnants” together, to work out in wholesome friction the best methods of self-government and constitutional law. Hither have come, each with a gift, first of all and best of all, the Puritan to New England, and the sturdy Scotchman, the honest Briton, the quick-witted Irishman, the Huguenot, son of a martyr and father of heroes, the Dutchman, full of honesty and trade, the German — happy combination of much goodness and few faults, the Scandinavian, the Italian, the Mongolian, and the African, by the grace of God and the will of the people and the terrible tribulation of war, transformed from chatteldom to manhood.

In studying the history of our country, we may and must study its biographies. Its own biography, so to say, is made up of the stories of its individual lives. It was once taught, with more or less truth, that the genius of a whole nation is the creation of a single life, as Alexander's and Solomon's and Julius Caesar's. It is only a partial truth. The individual of mark represents, just as truly as he creates, a community. Marcus Aurelius and Christopher Columbus were not prodigies, springing from the air

or the sky or the rocks:—their roots struck into soil—they were born in the travail of forces, which are only lost to our sight because the chronicles are kept by courtiers. It is a flippant philosophy which sees in human progress only the work of individual greatness; the great individual incarnates in blossom and fruit, the processes of society for an era, as the aloe expresses the natural forces of a century. We look at the liberal legislation of England for a quarter of a century, its education bills, its burials bills, its extension of the franchise, its disestablishments, and we give glory to Gladstone and Peel. But behind Gladstone and Peel there has been a great constituency, struggling with burdens and pleading for rights, often in inarticulate ways, and they have only waited for the strong arm of Peel and the matchless voice of Gladstone to strike and speak for them. We look back to the first half of the seventeenth century, and we glory in Winthrop and Hooker, but Winthrop and Hooker were largely representative of the common ideas of the little colony. We stand in reverence before Washington, in admiration before Trumbull, and Adams, and Hamilton, in enthusiasm before Putnam and Moultrie, but let us never forget the hardy, believing, self-denying men whom they represented and who supported them. When we honor Putnam, and Wooster, and Knowlton, and Chester, and Humphreys, let us never forget the thirty-one thousand, nine hundred and thirty-one men, most of them private soldiers, whom Connecticut sent to the revolutionary fields, from Ticonderoga to Yorktown. Neither let us forget that the atmosphere of Connecticut was charged with ozonic forces of the most patriotic and self-centered kind. Our ancient

seat of learning at New Haven was a very furnace of patriotism. In 1774, Dr. (President) Stiles wrote "there is to be another Runnymede in New England." In 1779, President Napthali Daggett, with his fowling piece blazing away at British regulars, made the most picturesque single portrait of the war. And a greater than both, through the war a tutor, but afterwards President, one of America's chief educators, Timothy Dwight, whose distinguished grandson and successor to-day leads our worship of Almighty God, was firing the young men of Yale with that burning patriotism which prepared them so well for the prominent part which they were so soon to play in the trying campaigns of war. Of the small number of alumni upon Yale's catalogue in the days of the revolution, two hundred and thirty-four rendered conspicuous personal service upon the battlefield. The universities have been the friends of freedom. Bigotry and tyranny are exorcised from the human mind, as evil spirits, by the influence of intelligence and education and culture, an influence covering and blessing both the learned and the unlearned.

You will not expect an extended sketch of our hero to-day—only now and then a leaf from his life. Salem had the honor of his birth, in 1718, and well did he repay the obligations of his Massachusetts' nativity, by the defense and deliverance which he brought to her territory. He was of sturdy English blood, and, curiously enough, the family crest was a wolf's head.

Like Washington and Hale, in his youth he was a conspicuous leader in athletic sports. When he visited the city of Boston for the first time, and his rural appearance excited uncomplimentary comment

from a city youth of twice his size, who chaffed him in a way to which the country boy was not accustomed, the young Israel proceeded to amuse the Boston people, who even at that early day seem to have had a keen eye for the champion's belt, by a thorough, if not a scientific pounding of his antagonist. He was first married at twenty-one years of age, and at once moved to Pomfret. He settled at Mortlake, and became a large proprietor of land. Here, in industry and domestic virtue, he pursued the hardy life of a Connecticut farmer. He was fond of horses and was interested in stock-breeding. Here occurred the wolf's den incident, a story which will be told to reverent and admiring boys as a classic so long as boys admire pluck and bravery—which may it be as long as grass grows! In the French and Indian war, beginning as a captain under Sir William Johnson in 1753, he continued in service until his final return from Canada, in 1762.

In looking at the great deliverance from the oppressions of England in our war for independence, we are sometimes tempted to forget the importance of the earlier struggles, in which our fathers fought, as British colonists, against the aggressions of France upon the North. This contest continued at intervals for nearly a century before the revolution. The English colonists held the coast. They had brought here the free ideas of the common law, of *magna charta*, and the bill of rights. They had done much more; they had abolished primogeniture and entails, had introduced reasonable laws of inheritance, had established universal education, had made, in the cabin of the Mayflower, an embryonic attempt at a written constitution, and, at Hartford, in 1639, had indeed made

a written constitution which is the type of the written constitutions of modern civilization. They were learning the sovereignty of the individual man, and were unlearning lessons of subservience and idolatry to rank, and title, and heredities, and despotisms, and divine rights, and prelacies, and spiritual and temporal lordships, which were entrenched in Bastilles, and behind pillars of Hercules, built up by centuries on centuries of assumptions, traditions, prescriptions and possessions, supported by credulity and superstition, by fears, natural and unnatural, by the power of money and of the sword, by punishments in the name of law and by threats of everlasting punishment in the flames of hell. Out of these bigotries and horrible oppressions of body, and mind, and soul, and into these regions of political right and moral sweetness and intellectual light, the Puritans in New England, and the colonists in Virginia and Maryland were leading a civilization better even than the advanced civilization of England. But there were other powers struggling to get possession of this fair land—little known then for its real physical worth, but at least known as a market for European wares, and as yielding something in the way of furs, and a few other articles of value. For many years French civilization on the North and West, and Anglo Saxon civilization on the East, wrestled for supremacy. The scene of the conflict was New York and Canada, and Northern and Eastern Pennsylvania. The French held the great rivers, could make war with the Indians for allies as against the English colonists, whose course with the Indians had always been unwise and unjust, a policy which we haven't yet out-grown. In the end the

flimsy Latin civilization was driven from the country, and we were delivered from the power of Bourbonism and the hands on the dial went forward and not backward.

And what a country was then saved for the larger humanities! A land, the granary and garden of the world, the story of whose factories and agriculture and commerce is a very miracle of progress; a land, great in material wealth and its innumerable agencies and demonstrations of mercantile success, and even greater in its elevations of the humble, its development and culture and education of the many, its abolition of class notions and class facts in political and religious life, its loyalty to law without the defence of bayonets, and its development of that personal freedom, which is the supreme Divine gift that lifts man to manhood; a land offering to human study the sublime picture of a nation, inconceivably strong, and every year becoming stronger in geometrical progressions, according to the will of Almighty God, governing itself without the sceptre of a king, or the patronizing dominion of an enthroned ecclesiastic, or the tread and tramp of a standing army.

And this repulse of haughty Bourbon France could never have been won by the British army alone, and her Braddocks and Abercrombies. They knew little of the country and less of the hostile Indians. But the provincials knew the Indians and their ways, and they knew the country, and its mountains, and rivers, and swamps, and its winters, too.

We risk little in saying that for audacity, intrepidity, ingenuity, for an imprudence which concealed the very genius of prudence, for sagacity, intuition,

prescience of hostile manœuver, for leadership in woods and boats and swamps, no single man who entered into that conflict was the superior of Israel Putnam. He was not slow in exhibiting his peculiar genius in these campaigns. He soon found out the incapacity of many of his superiors. Several times he took unauthorized responsibilities, and once or twice forbidden ones, which were only saved from severe criticism by the brilliant success which attended him on each occasion, and by the demonstrations which he so often made of his larger intelligence. As an Indian fighter, Putnam had qualifications which have not been excelled in the long story of our conflicts with the red men, from John Mason, to George S. Crook. And, in the more regular contests with the Frenchmen, he was almost uniformly a successful and skilful officer. His bravery was of that highest kind which never lost its wisdom. When he and Major Rogers were examining Crown Point, and had moved up so close to the fort and so far from their troops that Rogers was taken, Putnam had no idea of letting Rogers go into captivity, nor any more idea of firing a gun to insure his own; so he knocked the captor of his friend dead with one blow from his old fusee. The career of Putnam in these earliest wars was as romantic as the journeys and battles of *Æneas*, and as real as martyrdom. In the forests and swamps and fields, in rapids and creeks, and on the lakes, by night and by day, in reconnoitre, or bush fight or battle line, as scout, or as company leader, in charge of a battalion or in single combat, he was tireless in action, fertile in expedients, absolutely insensible to fear and almost invariably a

victor. A prisoner, bound to a tree, struck in the jaw by the butt of a Frenchman's musket, his head made a target for Indian tomahawks, then released and tied to a stake, surrounded by faggots, and, when the flames were already scorching him, rescued by the bravery of an officer as by a miracle, his iron nerve never failed him. Prostrate upon his back and tied to two stout saplings at diverging angles, and surrounded by sleeping Indians, suffering the agonies of the rack, his humor bubbled into a laugh as he thought what a droll picture it all would make for a painter's canvass. He struggled with fire at the magazine for hours, until but a single thickness of board stood between the furious element and the gunpowder, and until he conquered, and saved fort, garrison, and magazine, his hands, and face, and legs blistered and burned, the very skin coming off with his burnt mittens. There is more pluck exhibited than glory in prospect in such a fight with fire at the very lip of a magazine. At last, maimed, worn and lacerated, he arrived a prisoner at Montreal. Here he met the cultured and patriotic Colonel Philip Schuyler. At the shocking sight of Putnam's condition, Colonel Schuyler said that it was difficult to restrain his language "within bounds consistent with the prudence of a prisoner and the meekness of a Christian."

In this war Putnam was doing more than to help in whipping the French. He was studying as well the strength and the weakness of the British soldier, and the qualities and invincibilities of his provincial neighbors and brethren.

For the next twelve or more years after the French and Indian war, Putnam remained at home

an object of admiration and love by his neighbors and many friends. He was honored by civil office and enjoyed the hearty esteem of the colonists.

And here we claim for Putnam an intuition of the coming independence, which few, even of the most radical of the fathers, dared to hope for. A complete and successful separation and a new republic were things which great and wise leaders regarded as hardly to be desired, still less to be expected. Freedom under the crown was the general hope. But this unlettered man thought deeper and saw more clearly the struggles to come, and their issue. He waited for a war which he felt was at hand and for a victory which he felt was to be ours. He well understood the encroaching tyranny of the crown, he knew there could be but one solution of provincial troubles and in that fearful contest, with its not unguessed agonies, and sorrows, and disappointments, and jealousies, and mistakes, he knew the ultimate invincibility of the American colonists. And so, when a stamp master was appointed to enforce the stamp act in Connecticut, Putnam inspired the measures, more forcible than polite, which resulted in his resignation. And his statement to Governor Fitch on the subject was so unmistakable in its tenor that no stamps ever came to this colony from New York. When the Port bill oppressed Boston, Putnam sent on sheep and lambs, and openly declared that their blood was but a type of the sacrifice which he and his neighbors were ready to make in the common defence. And when the tidings of Lexington came, the old prophet saw the morning in whose twilight he had been watching.

Even the accomplished Warren, upon whose green grave the muses of history, and poetry and eloquence have delighted to linger, no less a patriot than Putnam, but more conservative, and inclined to hope yet in the power of persuasion, and perhaps trusting to the noble oratory of Chatham, failed to convince the blunt old soldier that harmony was possible, and ultimately acquiesced in his bold measures. When British officers reasoned with him on the folly of colonial resistance, and asked him if he had any doubt that five thousand veterans could march through the continent, "no doubt" said he, "if they behaved civilly and paid well for everything they wanted;" "but" he continued, after a pause, "if in an hostile manner, though the American men were out of the question, the women with ladles and broomsticks would knock them all on the head before they could get half through." Putnam expected to fight the mother country and expected to win.

For these intuitions we claim eminence for our General. It is given to few to feel the first waters of tides, to know the gathering storms and coming sun bursts, to measure the patience and endurance of peoples in the shadow of death, and to forecast the issues of crises, as by instinct. Such power of insight we conceive was the highest trait in the composition of that peculiar man, Abraham Lincoln. Such powers normally belong to men of the people. Here kings and prelates have often failed. Putnam was thoroughly of the people. His call to the Major Generalship was by a *vox populi*, which stood not upon proprieties of order in promotion. Untrained in letters, the wants of his countrymen and their

rights had been his alphabet. He had found out the capacities for endurance of man's physical nature, the inborn sovereignty of the people, the electric power of patriotism. And so he looked across the ocean to the King and felt the certain coming of continued and increasing exactions; he looked over the rough hills of New England, and the plains of the South, and from Lake Champlain to Georgia he heard the speech of patriots and their prayers, and, clearly as he foresaw the snows of December and the foliage of June, he recognized the coming clash of arms and the deliverance of the oppressed.

The call came soon. It found him in the field. Leaving his oxen unloosed and mounting his horse, he rode to Boston to the fight which he saw had come, and had come to stay until it should be forever settled upon principles of freedom and right. He forsook his home and the joys of domestic life to serve the people without a hesitating look or word. He returned from Massachusetts for troops, and was appointed a General by Connecticut.

It was but a few weeks from Lexington to Bunker Hill.

"God helps the heavy battalions" said Napoleon. God helped David and his sling, says history. Is it to be a victory for Napoleonism, and the fire of hell which he made the genius and motive of battle, or shall wrath and its remainders be turned to praise and made to promote the ongoing of truth and the civilization of society?

It was a sorry match as a military problem. Here were regulars, veterans, victors of many fields, trained to touch shoulders, to hear commands, to

march and wheel in time ; their arms were well appointed and clean, their ammunition was plentiful and of the best ; their officers were educated, experienced, brave. Here were traditions, and prestige, and the grip of the leading monarchy of the world upon its colonies. Here were ships of war and the flames of fire striking terror by the horrors of a burning city. But here too, were tyranny, and oppression, and pride, and swelling self-confidence.

There were a few hundred yeomen with insufficient arms and short rounds of powder and shot. They have come from Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Their leaders have had little council together. They have scraped up a clumsy redoubt and have covered a rail fence with loose hay. Thank God they are on a hill ! But if they are awkward, untried soldiers, they are freeholders and freemen. If they have no common acquaintance, they have a common cause ; if they have no uniformity of dress or of arms, they have but one purpose and a single inspiration. If they have left different firesides in different states, they have all left homes with kindred watch-words. They all love freedom and God ; they all hate oppression and the King. And with them and over them are invisible things in holy concert ; the elevation of man, the supremacy of constitutional law, the transfiguration of human beings from vassalage to independence, and the will of Almighty God that these vast millions of acres of land, and lake, and river, with treasures unguessed of soil, and stream, and mine, shall not be tributary to the haughty little island across the Atlantic.

The assault was made, and renewed, and again renewed. The people watched the struggle from the roofs and steeples of Boston, and held up the cause of the patriots with their prayers. And the friends of man have returned to the picture of that struggle again and again, and with tears of joy. The undisciplined yeomanry withstood the charge of the best disciplined troops, and the crowning victory of Yorktown was spoken from Bunker Hill. The last of the retiring patriots, he, who had filled, as nearly as the circumstances would allow anyone to fill it, the position of commanding general, who had superintended the construction of the humble fortifications, who had cautioned the patriots to hold their fire and to husband their powder, who had offered his stalwart body as a target for British balls from the beginning to the end, upon the hill, in the field, and in the highway, in the assault, in urging re-inforcements, and in the final withdrawal, was Israel Putnam.

Three weeks after the battle Samuel B. Webb wrote from the seat of war at Cambridge:

“ You will find that Generals Washington and Lee are vastly prouder and think higher of Putnam than of any man in the army, and he, truly, is the hero of the day.”

On the 9th of July, 1775, Silas Deane, a Connecticut man of national reputation and intensely patriotic, wrote from Philadelphia, then the capital city:

“ The cry here is Connecticut forever. So high has the universally applauded conduct of our Governor (Trumbull), and the brave intrepidity of old General Putnam and his troops raised our colony in

the estimation of the whole continent." And again on July 20th, 1775, he writes:

"Putnam's merit runs through the continent; his fame still increases, and every day justifies the unanimous applause of the country. Let it be remembered that he had every vote of the congress for Major-General, and his health has been the second or third at almost all our tables in this city."

But they were all heroes. Not only Putnam, and Prescott, and Warren, and Stark, and Knowlton, and Chester, and Grosvenor, but each one of the fifteen hundred who proved in the heat and carnage of that June afternoon that free hearts are invincible. On the 17th of June, 1775, Artemas Ward and Charles Lee were chosen to the office of Major-General by congress, and on the 19th of June, Philip Schuyler and Israel Putnam were elected to the same rank, and of the four, Putnam alone was chosen unanimously.

I have alluded to Putnam as the commanding officer at Bunker Hill. It is enough to say that the voice of contemporaneous literature and the representations of the early sketches and pictures of the battle as published in this country and on the other side of the ocean, are substantially unanimous in demonstration of the fact. It was reserved for later and ill-judged criticism to question it. The artificial rules of etiquette and precedence were then, as they had been before, and as they now are, and as they ever will be the cause of historical quarrel and discussion. The troops about Boston had their own State commanders; indeed, Major Stark, of New Hampshire, was chosen to his rank by the soldiers upon the ground. There was little unity of plan. General

Ward, who was the officer in command of all the forces, was at Cambridge. It is almost certain that General Putnam represented him at the battle, but the troops on the hill were chiefly from Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts troops were in the redoubt where Colonel Prescott had personal command. It is a fair statement of the case to say that Putnam's rank gave him the command by his presence on the field; that the plan of the engagement and its execution were principally his, although he was unable to get the re-inforcements which were needed and for which he made loud demand and continued exertion. In the broad sense of leadership there can be no doubt in any impartial mind that he was the leader of the American troops, and was so considered by friends and foes at the day and time.

It is to be regretted that doubts about Putnam's capacity for leadership, and even about his courage, have been raised, but they must have been. They were raised about Washington, and Greene, and every great leader in the revolution. And one only needs to read any history, so called, to see the strange possibilities of conclusion to which authorities can arrive in their accounts of battles, and estimates of military men and military affairs. Nor is this peculiarity of historical literature exclusively true of the battle-field. It has been several times argued, and last of all by the mysterious language of ciphers, by which any literary result conceivable can be attained, that the greatest of poets and dramatists did not write his own plays, and, still later, we learn that the most charming, characteristic, and inimitable reminiscence of a great war, written by our own greatest soldier

and greatest man, was, in fact, the literary achievement of another, whose greatness the Republic had failed to appreciate. But while it is true, such is the power of partisanship, prepossession, and bias over the human mind, and so easily do we make into beliefs those thoughts which are born of our wishes, that there can be few facts of history which, in a quarter of a century after their occurrence, will not be questioned, the world will still justly credit Hamlet to Shakespeare, his Memories to Grant, and Bunker Hill to Putnam.

Washington did not meet Putnam until he came to Cambridge. They had both achieved glory in the Indian war; they knew and loved each other, but they met for the first time at the headquarters of the Continental army. And the absolute confidence which Washington had in Putnam never abated until death. He had no doubt about delivering his Major-General's commission to him with his own hands, while he hesitated in the case of others. He had no doubt in sending him to New York to take chief command, after the enemy had retreated from Boston, and after Putnam himself had taken possession of the forts, provisions, guns, stores, and supplies in the name of the thirteen colonies. He had no doubt in intrusting to him the supreme command at Philadelphia in his own absence. He had no doubt in directing him to open his military letters. He had no doubt of his purity, patriotism and rare capacity, when he addressed him in words of deep tenderness, in the day of an assured peace based upon our national independence.

The story of Putnam's career from Bunker Hill until his paralysis in the winter of 1779-80 is deeply interesting. He had his share, and no more, of the ill fortunes of the campaigns, and he had his full share of success. He fought the so called battle of Long Island under circumstances for which he was not responsible, but which made success impossible; he conducted the retreat through the present limits of the City of New York before the superior force of Lord Howe with characteristic fearlessness and courage. His discriminating eye selected the heights of West Point as a base of operations; he captured hundreds, probably thousands, of prisoners in the Jerseys; he beat the bullets of the British dragoons as he rode down Horseneck steps, where no red coat dared to follow him, and so aroused the admiration and wonder of Gov. Tryon, of odious memory, that he sent him a new cap for the one which had been ventilated by a British musket ball. He replied to the haughty demand of British officers for the return of the spy, Edmund Palmer, in such accurate and concise terms, that the letter has passed into classic literature.

It was not to be that Putnam's voice should thunder commands and his sword flash in the final victories. The horrible shock of his captivity in the earlier war, the re-action from his wearied life of exposure, the strain of his long ride to Concord and Boston, as glorious and heroic as Paul Revere's, had searched through the joints of even his matchless harness. As he was on his way to headquarters, at sixty-one years of age, the wild throbs of his noble heart pressed too sorely

upon his aching brain, and the strong man fell ; those muscles, which never before had refused to obey the commands of his sovereign will, gave no response. It was a sad ride back to his loved Mortlake, and the fields which he had made green, and the flocks which he had guarded, and the friends for whom he had long hazarded his life. But it was to be. He must wait, with moist eyes and lifted prayer, for the good end of whose coming he made no doubt. For eleven years, with unclouded mind, until the surrender of Cornwallis, and the final peace, and the recognition of the union by the European nations, and the adoption of the constitution, and the oath of the first President, watched by admiring friends, telling over and over again the adventures and victories of the past, he lived close to the spot where he now sleeps, until the 29th of May, 1790, when he went on to join the patriot Governor, Jonathan Trumbull, and the patriot martyr, Nathan Hale, and to wait awhile to welcome Washington and LaFayette.

Think not as you read of Putnam's bravery that it was the bravery of thoughtlessness ; his courage was of the kind that thinks. Think not, as you see him soiled in the grime of battle and red with blood stains, that he rejoiced in destruction ; he was as sensitive to the sufferings of others as a mother. Think not as you study his rugged features that he was vulgar and brutal, he guarded the honor of woman with the chivalry of a knight. Think not as you hear him hiss imprecations, in his lisping accent, upon the British troops, that he was a blasphemer ; so were their enemies cursed by the devout Hebrew prophets and psalmists, whose battle hymns Putnam

studied as models inspired from heaven. Think not he loved war more than peace, the battle-field more than the farm, the camp more than home. He loved war for the sake of peace and freedom, he loved the battle-field because he loved his farm, he loved the camp because he saw through and beyond its tents the rest of home.

Let us never for a moment believe that the fathers fought for military glory or for war's sake. They fought for peace and for law; for states which they loved and for a Union whose future they but dimly guessed. Indeed when the war was over, and the independence of the United States was assured, and the representatives of the states were convened to form a constitution, how little did even they know in what supreme architecture they were building, and how great things they were creating. There has never been assembled in the history of the world, in the name of country, or science, or religion, a company of men of like numbers, who brought to their duties larger intellectual capacity, and higher moral qualities and purer patriotism, nor one that was more apparently under the special guidance of the great Father of all men, than the little band of statesmen which met in Philadelphia to organize a constitution for the people of the thirteen confederated states. And Connecticut was there by a representation inferior to none—by Sherman, second only to Franklin in wisdom, by Ellsworth, unsurpassed in eloquence, and by Johnson, unexcelled in scholarship. As to-day we have a lineal descendant of President Dwight to lead our devotions, so are we fortunate in having a lineal descendant of Dr. Wil-

liam Samuel Johnson to sound the rythm of our verses.

In passing, let me remind you that our Connecticut Sherman was the only man who enjoys the singular place in history of having signed the four supreme papers of American independence: the Articles of Association of the congress of 1774, the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution.

Had that little body of men really felt the full greatness of their work, for themselves and their children, for the American people, and for humanity, they must have risen above their environment to heights of seership never before scaled. With local attachments, strong and dominant, and yet bound together by the success of a union against oppression, and conscious of the weakness of a confederation which had no element of nationality in it, they wrought out that matchless instrument which reserved to the several communities self-government in the matters which are best left to local control, and bound a people into unity in those matters which make a nation for national defense, and national commerce, and national welfare. The rights of the states are safest in the sovereignty of a nation, and the nationality of the Republic is safest in the self-government of the states. So are the waves distinct, but it is one sea; so are the trees distinct, but it is one forest; so are the mountains distinct, but it is one range. And the older nations are copying more and more our example of home rule in local matters, and national control in national things, and the will of

the people, limited only by the solemn, catholic, unimpassioned principles of organic law, supreme in each.

As we recall the history of the fathers, reverence and gratitude bid us bend at many a battle field and in many a council chamber. And how often are we tempted to say of this or that or the other one, that his strong arm, or his heart's blood, or his foresight, or his patience, or his genius at harmonizing discord, or his zeal of enthusiasm, or his inspiring magnetism, or his clarion word of command, or his silent act of obedience, was the salvation of the young nation, as it escaped destruction in ten thousand crises!

But it is neither easy, nor wise, nor necessary to separate too sharply the greatness of the revolutionary heroes into its individual forces. It is seldom that nature resolves her shafts of light into prismatic colors and writes their elemental hues upon the sky. The dash of Wayne, the daring of Putnam, the tireless strategy of Greene on the field, the wisdom of Trumbull, the courageous and tenacious counsel of Adams and Quincy, the eloquence of Ellsworth, the sagacity of Franklin and Sherman, the genius of Hamilton, and the foresight of Morris, in the state, and the supreme and unique judgment, patriotism, and leadership, both on the field and in the state, of the one and only Washington were all blended in the harmonies of a historic whole which has bathed humanity with a flood of light leading on toward a perfect day.

Putnam was not learned in martial lore, he was not a master of the alleged chess-board of war; he was not a combiner of great military causes to bring about great strategic results. In managing

divisions, corps, and brigades, in distributions of the different arms of the service, artillery, cavalry, infantry, commissary, and hospital, in generalizations of campaigns, or of a single battlefield, he was surpassed by many of his revolutionary associates — by many, whose commissions ran out for one cause or another before the end — as well as by Washington and Greene. Like Wayne and Arnold, he fought whatever was in front of him; battle-line, fortress, bushman, hostile boats, white man, black man, red man — if it hindered his cause, if it stayed his advance, it must go away or go down. He believed in hard pounding in attack, so did Wellington and Grant. He was fertile in plan within certain ranges, and could fight the fire of stratagem with the fire of counter stratagem. Like Grant again, he moved very early in the morning, and like that same great general and greater man, he never learned that there was a time to quit the field while a ray of light flamed in the sky. He was a military leader rather than a great general. His leadership was marked by enthusiasm and faith, by daring and tenacity and endurance. And he was in every fibre of his being a true man — kind, honest, pure, conscientious, devout. He loved goodness, and good men, and good things; he hated jealousies, and envies, and bitterness, and injustice.

Putnam was not a scholar; he knew nothing of the dead languages of Virgil and Herodotus, but he needed no pedagogue to translate for him the legend “E pluribus unum,” nor clerkly minister to interpret for him the motto “Qui transluit sustinet.” He was unfamiliar with the written philosophies of state craft, but he knew

that freemen were competent to make a state without the consent of a king. He knew nothing of navigation, but when duty called him to descend the rapids of the Hudson, he found a new course through boiling waves, and past sharp edged rocks. He knew little about the scientific distinction between original and reflected light, and he never heard of the spectroscope, but he knew that the moonlight on the river was his ally to scourge the treacherous Indians. He had never heard of evolution nor studied the birth of nations, but out of the travails of campaigns in Canada, and bitter suffering by Lake Champlain, by the stone walls of Lexington, and the hay-fence ramparts of Bunker Hill, he felt the certain birth of an independent nation at that early hour, when even the great Washington and Adams only dared to hope for a better and more honorable dependence upon the mother country. The fibres of his being were neither by nature nor by culture delicate or refined, but his heart beat and his nerves thrilled with a patriotism as pure and true as the on-rushing waters of Niagara. If there was no place in his garden for tropical flowers, there was no room there for poisonous grasses. If he had little conception of the great universe of stars and planets, he knew there was to be a new day, and he stood and waited for the dawn with his sword in hand.

What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?

But what went ye out into the wilderness to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft raiment are in king's houses.

But what went ye out to see? a prophet?

Yea, I say unto you and more than a prophet.

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